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ABSTRACT

The number and depth of global problems is increasing and the capacity of the United Nations (UN) to deal with them is diminishing. The international effort to deal with environmental problems is fragmented and underfunded. The UN has no mechanism for the routine identification and analysis of problems and the proposal of solutions to them. In the peace and security area, the changed objects of war from those that prevailed at the end of World War II confound the UN approach. Most wars that are fought today try to bring down a regime or force it to change its policies rather than seize land from the country. In sum, the participants found the UN wanting as an effective multilateral institution for the management of a growing list of world problems. There is a definite need to address the problem of making the UN a more effective instrument for bringing about a better world. A list of conference participants and the conference-opening address are included. (Author/JB)

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The United Nations and the Future of Internationalism

22nd UN of the Next Decade Conference 1987

The Stanley Foundation

SO 020 509

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The United Nations and the Future of Internationalism

Report of the Twenty-second United Nations of the Next Decade Conference

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June 21-25, 1987

Executive Summary

The relationship between the United Nations and the idea of *internationalism* was chosen as the topic for this conference in the belief that at its origin the United Nations was meant to be the institutional embodiment of internationalism. The opening remarks postulate that internationalism is more than a set of practices such as international law, cooperation, conciliation, development, etc. Rather it is the force behind those practices — the wisdom or vision to look beyond immediate individual or parochial interests and to inquire what is the right or good thing to do.

It is asserted that the changing nature of life on this planet increasingly demands that world leaders exercise such vision, but that it rarely happens. Making the United Nations a more effective organization requires that it be reinstilled with the internationalist spirit — that the ethical element in multilateral arrangements be recaptured.

Most participant reaction was that while internationalism is a worthwhile political concept, contemplating it is not a useful approach to revitalizing the United Nations. Rather, it is necessary

to examine the mechanisms of intergovernmental collaboration — the political tactics.

Mounting Problems

That examination reveals that the number and depth of global problems is increasing and the capacity of the United Nations to deal with them is diminishing. In the economic sphere, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) — the economic companion institutions of the United Nations — are struggling to maintain stability in the world economy which is their primary mission. Their success in promoting development of the Third World is even more erratic.

In some quarters the United Nations is seen as a rather important actor in resolving issues related to the biosphere, in part because of the successful launching of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) in the early 1970s. However, the international effort to deal with environmental problems is fragmented and underfunded. Additionally, finding the kind of creative reformulation of the environmental problems which led to the United Nations' early success is a matter of chance. It was argued that the institution has no mechanism for the routine identification and analysis of problems and the proposal of solutions to them.

In the peace and security area, the changed objects of war from those which prevailed at the end of World War II confound the United Nations' approach. Most wars which are fought today try to bring down a regime or force it to change its policies rather than seize land from that country. Also, and very ironically, the realization that most regional conflicts can be managed to the extent that direct superpower confrontation can be avoided has created a situation in which so-called low-intensity warfare is accepted as a permanent feature of modern life.

In sum, the participants found the United Nations wanting as an effective multilateral institution for the management of a growing list of world problems. In discussing these problems, a more general issue frequently reemerged — a question of fairness. Participants noted that the disparities between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, are on the rise. Wars are fought primarily by poor people in underdeveloped countries. These facts point to a fundamental breakdown of the United Nations which was created to make the world more peaceful and equitable.

The economic field best illustrates the increasing unfairness in the world. While a whole continent — Africa — suffers from de-

spair over the inability to obtain sufficient capital to have a realistic chance to escape from abject poverty, most of the industrialized world is preoccupied with negotiating new international arrangements in the dynamic areas of the world economy — information and services. There is a need to promote both stability and fairness in the world economy, most participants agreed, but that has eluded the United Nations. Why?

Differing Analyses and Solutions

The rapporteurs found three different perspectives among the participants in addressing that question — symptomatic, structural, and conceptual. Those who took a symptomatic approach think the existing mechanisms only need some fine-tuning and the willingness of member states to live up to the Charter and to use the United Nations. They tend to argue that reform in the budgetary, financial, and personnel operations of the organization may be sufficient to restore faith in the institution and result in greater use of it.

The structuralists see deeper problems. They tend to focus on the gap between today's global situation and the United Nations' 1940s structure. From that perspective they see a need to identify and analyze the nature of the new world problems and conceive new structures to try to manage them more effectively and efficiently. Some of them argued that there is an inextricably interlinked relationship between the structure of an institution, its ability to set a realistic agenda for action, and the willingness of members to use it.

Those who took a conceptual approach believe that merely treating symptoms would be inadequate, and that devising new structures could well be insufficient to address the fairness question — i.e., more efficient multilateral institutions may only make it easier for the powerful to exploit the weak. They maintain that it is necessary to challenge some of the basic assumptions about how the world works and to try to establish norms such as lawfulness and the mutual benefit in working toward a common good on global issues. While some may find that effort too abstract, they argue that effective policies require vision and the sense that it is the right thing to do in order to sustain public support.

The report concludes that while the three perspectives may seem quite different, the common recognition of the necessity to address the need to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for a better world is a unifying force. Respect for efforts on all three levels is necessary.

Participants

Conference Chairman
Richard H. Stanley, President, The Stanley Foundation

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David J. Doerge, Director of Research Activities, The Stanley Foundation

Participants
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Gene M. Lyons, Professor of Government, The United Nations Institute, Dartmouth College

Kishore Mahbubani, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Singapore to the United Nations

Olara A. Otunnu, Former Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations

John Gerard Ruggie, Professor of International Affairs, Institute of War and Peace Studies, Columbia University

Sardar Shah Nawaz, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations

John A. Thomson, Former Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations

Guenther van Well, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United States

Raimo Vayrynen, Professor of International Relations, Department of Political Science, University of Helsinki

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Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only. Participants attended as individuals rather than as representatives of their governments or organizations.

Rapporteurs Doerge and Martin

Opening Remarks

Richard H. Stanley
President, The Stanley Foundation

Welcome to the 22nd Conference on the United Nations of the Next Decade. From its inception in 1965 this conference series has been an ambitious undertaking for the foundation. Its focus is on the long term, a decade or more into the future, and this presses participants to expand their thinking beyond immediate concerns.

Even with an ambitious heritage, however, we paused before settling on this year's topic, "The United Nations and the Future of Internationalism." The subject implies a discussion of some of the most fundamental precepts which underlie the United Nations. The pause was brief, however, because I am convinced that the times require reexamination of those very basic principles.

In the next four days I hope you will be active participants in discussions of such questions as what internationalism is and means; whether the concept is valid in today's and tomorrow's world; and whether and how the United Nations can or should advance the concept. I won't, however, pretend not to have some views on those questions at the outset. And I want to share some of those ideas with you in a way that I hope provokes your thinking and sets the tone for an open-ended discussion.

The World Scene

I think you will agree that the world today is more interconnected in more ways than ever before. Economic interdependence becomes more self-evident daily. Trade in commodities, goods, and services — many of which are vital to our way of life — is essential to a growing and healthy economy. The financial problems of heavily indebted nations threaten people and institutions far beyond their borders. Fluctuations in the currency of major trading nations have repercussions all around the world. There is lit-

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erally no prospect of building and sustaining a healthy national economy while all the rest of the world suffers. In another sphere, last year's nuclear accident at Chernobyl is an often-cited example of our shared environment and the common threat to citizens in many parts of the world from a catastrophe that happens far away.

The world is flooded with armaments. The world has invested $14 trillion in military spending between 1960 and 1985 with increased dispersal of armaments born out by the fact that Third World military spending has increased six-fold in this period. From the superpowers with their nuclear arsenals to some of the smallest nations, and then even further to non-state entities such as rebel groups and even individual terrorists, weapons are readily available and ever more destructive. This destructive aspect in human terms is evidenced by the fact that on average there have been 10 times as many deaths per war in this century as in the last. War can break out anywhere, and with the elaborate system of alliances and declarations of "vital interest" by the major powers and even middle powers, the escalation of any conflict to much broader dimensions is an imminent threat.

For decades now, world observers have spoken about how technology is shrinking the globe. Only when we stop to look back at the advance of technology over just the past ten to twenty years do we realize how fast the shrinking is occurring. The volume of information which can be sped around the globe — not subject to any meaningful control by governments — is by itself amazing. Technological advances in the past century have made international travel a much more available option for ordinary citizens and have greatly expanded human and social interactions as a result. And technological progress continues. As an example, the breakthroughs in superconductors which have been achieved in just the past year have the potential to further revolutionize our societies.

Most of the interconnections in today's world offer great opportunity — opportunity for social and economic progress and for the building of a world community. But it is also true, as many have observed, that the changing shape of society is frightening. Increasing interdependence economically, socially, technologically, and in the realm of security threatens known practices, institutions, and ways of life. Therefore, while many share my conviction that increasing interdependence is inevitable, many also still eye it warily and often struggle against it.

However, the struggle ultimately will be in vain. Interdepen-

dence is a fact of life. It is a phenomenon which cannot be stopped. It has already overwhelmed the ability of nations to control their own destiny. It has pushed some international institutions toward irrelevancy and threatens others with the same fate.

Unfortunately, human institutions, including governments and intergovernmental bodies, tend to be inflexible and resist change. Too few are adaptive to new conditions. Resistance and lethargic change — too little and too late — are common responses to increased interdependence. But events are overtaking institutions. We are at a point where we need better tools for managing interdependence.

Institutions and Change

In a sense, it appears that humans have always been caught in a dilemma between their need and desire to expand their horizons and to connect with their environment and fellow beings, and their fear that expansion and connection will prove to be unsettling or injurious. Over the centuries we have seen a sporadic growth in the reach of human political institutions — from the clan to the tribe to larger units such as city-states, through the building of empires and their ultimate dismantling into a feudal system, and finally to the creation of a nation-state system which reached even further to build new empires that included subjugated colonies around the globe. Even before the twentieth century began some international institutions were created in recognition of the need for some rudimentary forms of international governance. In this century international organizations proliferated; the UN system is the second generation.

The international institutions we have created were put in place to help manage the increasingly transnational character of the world while at the same time protecting and even expanding the nation-state system through decolonization. After 42 years, the UN system is showing the strains of having to serve both ends.

The financial crisis which has preoccupied the institution for the past two years is merely the latest indication of how low the United Nations has sunk in the estimation of one of its principal founding members. The Security Council has been virtually paralyzed for years. The Trusteeship Council is an anachronism. The Economic and Social Council has never worked and there is little reason to believe that an effective new role for it is imminent. The plethora of committees and commissions which it and the General Assembly have created meet in a never-ending succession of sessions with little or no impact. The General Assembly

struggles to reach near consensus on issues such as South Africa, Afghanistan, the Middle East, and Central America only to have its recommendations ignored.
The specialized agencies in the UN system do much good work but often operate independently of each other and the central organization causing duplication, intrusion into the domain of other agencies, and inappropriate meddling in political affairs.

To be sure, this is an overly negative picture. The United Nations operates many good programs to meet human needs, and, in the political field, the force of moral suasion does have some consequence. But surely it is apparent that these accomplishments fall far short of what is needed in a world where interconnections are becoming ever more clear.

For several years now I have been interested in a theory put forward by Thomas Kuhn in a book called *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. In this work Kuhn attempted to explain the history of science and how it has changed and progressed. He challenged traditional theory which held that science was a progression of building blocks each advancing the discipline as more science was successfully practiced. Instead, Kuhn postulated that scientific disciplines exist in paradigms or ways of looking at the discipline. Scientists work on problems, or puzzle solving, within the bounds and according to the rules of the current paradigm — a practice Kuhn called normal science. In the course of conducting normal science, scientists would encounter problems that could not be solved, or results that could not be explained within the context of the paradigm. He called these difficulties anomalies. As more anomalies developed, creating a crisis in the discipline, a new paradigm, a new and different way of looking at the discipline, would emerge. If the new paradigm successfully addressed itself to the known body of data and resolved the anomalies, there would subsequently, although not always willingly, be a shift to it. Two prominent examples of such shifts are the new paradigm of Copernicus to deal with the anomolies of Ptolemaic astronomy and the shift to the Einsteinian paradigm of physics from that of Newton.

Kuhn recognized that his scientific arguments had application in the political realm as well and I think have application to the United Nations today. The financial crisis and the wider and deeper political crises are anomalies. Administrative and budgetary reform — albeit necessary in the short term — are really just the practice of "normal science" — an effort to solve these anomalies within the confines of the existing paradigm. A more fundamental rethinking is in order. How can we know the time is

right? Kuhn instructs us that the reason is clear, ". . . retooling is an extravagance to be reserved for the occasion that demands it. The significance of crises is the indication they provide that an occasion for retooling has arrived."

Internationalism

What then should guide us as we retool? I think that we need to refine our institutions to enhance their service of an internationalist ethos. And that will require some forward thinking by member states, particularly the most powerful.

What do I mean by *internationalism?* Some define internationalism as a set of practices such as international law, cooperation, conciliation, development, and the like. Those are all laudable practices, but to me internationalism is really the basic concept out of which such efforts derive. It is an awareness, a sort of wisdom or vision, if you will, that allows one to look beyond immediate individual or parochial interests and to inquire — what is the right or good thing to do? In the articulation of that goal and the striving to achieve it, we as individuals, and the global community as a whole, will be enriched. How better then to define internationalism than as the pursuit of the common good — a pursuit which has value in and of itself.

Taking an internationalist perspective requires forward thinking and open-mindedness on the part of leaders of member states. Aristotle noted that the good is not simply a name one gives to one's preferences, and at least on some occasions I would hope that member states have the capacity to consider the longer-range common good. This is not an argument for selflessness. National leaders will predictably serve what they perceive to be their interests, and I think they should do so. Rather, it is an argument that it is in the long-term, enlightened self-interest of nations to consider actions which can serve a common good — to employ an internationalist standard. It is a call for nation-states and all of us to look beyond the immediate time frame, to consider the future beyond the next election, to envision and build the climate in which growing interdependence will benefit the common good. No nation can any longer control its own destiny. Rather, the destiny of us all is a shared one and our priority efforts should be directed toward the global visions, systems, and conditions that foster the best possible shared destiny.

Mankind has the capacity to act in such a fashion. Some cultures which we quite arrogantly call primitive have and still do in some instances exhibit an awareness of their real interdependence with one another and their surroundings. They've sometimes

been able to organize themselves to benefit from their perceptiveness. Throughout history groups have sprung up and organized societies of admittedly limited scope and duration that were based on principles of common good. What has proven far more difficult is to sustain the pursuit of that good within the world as it is politically organized today.

The United Nations and Internationalism

I do not expect the political shape of the world to change dramatically in the foreseeable future although the structure and systems will shake from the force of interdependence. If the United Nations is retooled, we will still be working with an intergovernmental organization. My hope, though, is that that organization will be more hospitable toward the internationalist ethos. I don't know how a retooled institution will look. I am quite certain that it will still be used for the negotiation of differences between governments. However, I hope those negotiations can be tempered by an internationalist view, and it may be that some structural adjustments can create forums which are more useful, appropriate, and amenable to such new-spirited negotiations.

It may also be that to instill the internationalist spirit in the United Nations will actually require a lowering of sights in the programmatic realm. Just a few weeks ago at another Stanley Foundation conference a participant observed that "the United Nations always tries to deal with everything all the time in every forum." Perhaps we need to limit what is dealt with — to work on a few items with an internationalist outlook and, if we find some success, build from there.

I hope in our discussions later this week we will be able to talk about some approaches that move the United Nations back onto the track of seeking peaceful solutions, promoting human rights, and enhancing the common well-being.

Conclusion

This then is an argument for recapturing the importance of the ethical element in multilateral arrangements and for having multilateral relationships that foster action based on longer-term, enlightened self-interest. If the conduct of international relations — whether unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral — is carried out **only** on the basis of power, advantage, and immediate gain, we are in great peril. If we act defensively, only trying to ward off disaster, the disaster will eventually overwhelm us.

Returning to Thomas Kuhn, I submit that the prevailing paradigm is one in which short-term gain, power advantage, and warding

off disaster are the "normal science" which finds itself riddled with anomalies. I think a growing number of people see the need for a new paradigm. Kuhn could have been talking about how international relations are conducted in the United Nations today when he said, "Political revolutions are inaugurated by a growing sense, often restricted to a segment of the political community, that existing institutions have ceased to adequately meet the problems posed by an environment that they have in part created."

To be successful in such a massive political undertaking requires that we return to an ethical standard. If we look back at history, those figures we most admire are men and women who exhibited high principle. We should not sell that characteristic short. In the epilogue to her book, *The March of Folly*, historian Barbara Tuchman notes, "Aware of the controlling power of ambition, corruption and emotion, it may be that in the search for wiser government we should look for the test of character first. And the test should be moral courage."

As we look to revitalize the United Nations for the next decade we need the wisdom and courage to embrace an internationalist view and to strengthen our institutional capacity to promote the values embodied in internationalism.

Carol Matthews welcomed Raimo Vayrynen as twenty international experts convene for four days of discussion.

The United Nations and the Future of Internationalism

The United Nations has been in a state of crisis for several years. The most frequently cited evidence of this is the severe financial difficulty facing the organization. However, it is generally accepted that the financial problems arise out of a more serious political crisis that stems from memberships disagreement about why the organization exists and what it should be doing.

These were difficult discussions. The participants all care about the United Nations and the important work which it has done and, more than ever before, needs to do. Yet, the discussions revealed a rather wide range of views on the depth and source of the problems facing the institution. Not surprisingly then, the participants held divergent views on what remedies were needed.

This report summarizes where participants' views merged and diverged. In the long term it may be that the differences are less important than participants' similar commitment to revitalize the United Nations.

The Internationalist Theme

There was agreement that the United Nations today is a marginal actor on the world political stage. That is contrary to the hope of the organization's founders: that it would be the centerpiece institution for the resolution of disputes and the improvement of the world situation.

Initial discussion focused on the relationship of the United Nations to the concept of internationalism. *Internationalism* was termed an idea, a "political concept," the desire and effort to build an international community. Some hold that internationalism is essential to the performance of the United Nations: that without

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The rapporteurs prepared this report following the conference. It contains their interpretation of the proceedings and is not merely a descriptive, chronological account. Participants neither reviewed nor approved the report. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

a sense of working toward a higher purpose the institution is without direction. Without that sense of direction, its capacity to function as an important political institution is limited. Therefore, it is necessary for the United Nations to recapture its internationalist orientation in order to become more effective.

Most participants agreed that the United Nations has not operated with an internationalist orientation, and a large majority rejected contemplation of internationalism as a useful way to revitalize the United Nations. They held that internationalism is a nice idea but that nations conduct their business and take policy positions primarily based on their own cost/benefit calculations. Notions of building toward a world community or serving a higher purpose are valued only to the extent that they are perceived to benefit the rather immediate interests of the nation assigning the value. In large part these participants argued that making the United Nations more effective depends upon improving the multilateral processes which it defines and through which it functions. A distinction was drawn between the preamble and first chapter of the UN Charter which contain the internationalist ideal — a political concept — and the remaining chapters which set up mechanisms for intergovernmental collaboration — the multilateral political tactics, which most said really matter.

For most of these participants, it is not internationalism that is in crisis but rather multilateralism that is in disarray. "Internationalism," in the words of one participant, "is a concept — not an organizational state." In fact, another participant argued, internationalist sentiment can get in the way of the successful practice of multilateral diplomacy, and it is making multilateralism work well that should be the focus of concern. There was a division within the group over whether there is a breakdown in the desire of nations to use multilateral options or whether there is just a malfunction in the multilateral institutions. Some held that there is a crisis in multilateralism and profound confusion and mistrust about whether or how to use multilateral arrangements. Others said that the will to use multilateral options will reemerge if the appropriate forums and institutions are put in place.

In any event, most participants saw little value in focusing attention on internationalism as a concept. Instead, attention was placed on the United Nations as a multilateral institution and the problems it is encountering in coping with a growing list of world problems and challenges.

Institutional Dysfunction

Most participants agreed that the number and depth of global

Participants assessed the deficiencies in the United Nations

problems are increasing and the capacity of the United Nations to deal with those problems is diminishing. Although a few thought that there might be some opportunities for progress now after a long period in which the United Nations has been struggling, even they agreed with the majority that the United Nations today is not coping effectively with new problems that have emerged or are still emerging.

Part of the problem is a matter of age. Now more than forty years old, the United Nations was created to deal with problems that were seen at the end of World War II. The nature of many of those problems has changed, and while the United Nations has shown itself to be fairly adaptable at times, it has not been consistently so. The cumulative effect of the many changes has surpassed the ability of the organization to adapt. Some participants said that there were also a number of invalid assumptions made when the Charter was drafted about the readiness and capacity of the world to cooperate and act in concert.

Participants discussed unmet challenges in three broad categories: economic, biospheric, and peace and security. Developments in technology and changing social factors impact on all three of these areas.

Economic Problems

The major economic trend which everyone acknowledged is interdependence. Participants said there is a "rising tide of interdependence," and as one participant said, "it is a tide that will not ebb." No nation can conceive of and execute a national economic policy independent of international considerations. In addition to interdependence, participants agreed that the relationships between economic issues are becoming more entangled. For example, the relationships between commodity prices, trade, financing, and monetary values are all tied into one bundle. Dealing with those issues within the context of the elaborate economic relationships between countries is very complex.

The Bretton Woods institutions — the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) — were created to try to manage some of those problems to provide more stability in the world economy than existed prior to World War II. However, the Bretton Woods institutions are run primarily by the world's wealthiest countries and are straining to meet the needs of many of the poorest. Many developing countries have become increasingly frustrated by the problems confronting them — mounting debt, a shortage of investment capital, and falling commodity prices. Some of the newly industrialized countries such as India, Brazil, and Argentina believe they are underrepresented in the Bretton Woods bodies. Other poorer countries see little inclination on the part of those institutions to address their problems with a sufficient degree of sensitivity to local concerns.

In the 1970s the United Nations' response to these problems was to call for the negotiation of a New International Economic Order (NIEO), a call that was launched by the developing countries. But the NIEO was never really accepted by the developed countries, and the idea is now in general disrepute even among many developing-country representatives. However, no other new idea has emerged to address the problems which that set of negotiations was intended to approach.

Another factor which makes it difficult for an intergovernmental body such as the United Nations to manage world economic affairs is that much, if not most, economic activity lies beyond the control of governments. Technological developments that affect the world economy are an example. Some of the most significant of these have occurred in the field of information — in particular computers and telecommunications. Some participants noted that while advanced countries are concerned about trying to work out arrangements for managing a new set of issues created

by these developments, the poor nations are still struggling to meet basic needs.

Beyond that, transnational corporations are a huge actor on the world scene, and whether their activities will on balance turn out to have been primarily positive or negative is yet to be seen. They were originally eyed very suspiciously by the governments of developing countries where they sought to operate but now are frequently seen more positively as a major source of investment capital. In addition to private commercial enterprises, major non-governmental organizations spur exchange of information and can help to stimulate economic activity.

Most participants agreed that in all of these areas of economic concern the United Nations' role is at best marginal. The economic activity of the central UN organization is mostly limited to political discussions that have little impact on real economic policymaking.

Biospheric Concerns

Several participants said that management of issues related to the biosphere is one of the success stories of the United Nations, and yet the number of problems and challenges in this area is far from diminishing. The United Nations has been rather heavily involved in matters related to the global commons — oceans, space, and atmosphere. There have been serious and sometimes productive negotiations on the use of space. The Law of the Sea Treaty negotiations were successfully completed in 1980 even though developed-country acceptance of its seabed mining provisions has not been forthcoming. The World Weather Watch — while not a function of the United Nations — has nevertheless been an excellent example of international cooperation.

In the early 1970s, under UN auspices, nations of the world accepted the fact that the environment is a resource that cannot be managed solely by national governments. Thus the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) was born. In fact, one participant said that the work which preceded the Stockholm Conference at which UNEP was created is an example of how a number of other global problems should be handled. Prior to the conference most developing countries saw pollution as a problem for industrialized nations. But, in large part due to the leadership of the conference, the issue was reframed so that the focus was not solely on pollution as a result of industrial activity but rather on the "sustainable use of biospheric resources." Viewed in that light, it became possible for developing countries to see their stake in this issue area. Such reconceptualization of the problem was cited as necessary to address other intractable topics.

Thought-provoking discussions occurred in a roundtable, off-the-record format.

However, even in this relatively successful area participants saw much room for concern. While UNEP has recorded some success, the international effort to deal with environmental problems is fragmented and underfunded. Additionally, developed countries have lost some of their interest. The efforts to deal with industrial and marine pollution are inadequate. Some new concerns such as the loss of species remain unaddressed. In addition, some of the connections between issue areas such as pollution and famine are just now being recognized, and no program to address them is being developed.

Perhaps more seriously, however, some participants said that the kind of reconceptualization which led to the creation of UNEP happens far too seldom. That effort, it was noted by one participant, required great intellectual leadership, and getting such leadership within the United Nations is primarily a matter of chance. It was argued that the institution has no mechanism for the routine identification and analysis of problems and the proposal of solutions to them.

Peace and Security Issues

The concept of collective security which was envisioned in the

UN Charter was rooted in the wartime alliance and became passé as soon as the alliance disintegrated after the war. The collective security provisions have long been regarded as impossible to use because of the differences among the five permanent members of the Security Council, each of whom has a veto. The United Nations has been able to play a role in limiting disputes and heading off others only through creative interpretation of the Charter and the exercise of leadership in pursuit of peace. The invention of peacekeeping forces and the enhanced role of the Secretary-General in mediating disputes are two of the primary examples.

A number of participants noted, however, that the organization's capacity to end conflicts has also been limited by restrictions on UN activities stemming from the Charter prohibition on interference into the internal matters of member states. Unlike earlier years, many conflicts today occur between factions within national borders. Some of these disputes are the residue of the colonial era. Others involve armed resistance to repression — for example, the struggle of some black groups in South Africa against the white ruling regime. Still others may stem from citizens of one nationality who reside as a minority within a country being supported by their national brethren living elsewhere. The Tamils in Sri Lanka were cited as an example.

Conflicts within borders are ripe for interference by outside countries who support one faction or another. In fact, some participants said that most wars are fought today not to seize land from another country but rather to bring down a regime or force it to change its policies. Thus, the types of war which were considered irregular at the end of World War II are now the standard.

Another change in the peace and security situation over the past forty years is that the world has learned that not many conflicts are likely to escalate to the point of involving the superpowers in a direct confrontation. While this is good on one level — and, in fact, limiting the chance of such confrontation has been a goal of the United Nations — a number of participants argued that the consequence has been that low levels of conflict are often allowed to go on unchecked. Therefore, we have a situation in which such so-called low-intensity warfare is a permanent feature of modern life.

Other problems in the peace and security area plague the United Nations. While there has been much discussion — and admittedly little action — on nuclear arms control issues, conventional weapons have proliferated with little or no attention. These ever more lethal conventional weapons are the ones that get

used. Terrorism is a rather new feature on the world scene, and while the United Nations has taken some action in this area, much yet needs to be done. Finally, it was noted that there has been something of a return to "old-fashioned" wars — that is, open conflict between nations. The Falklands/Malvinas War, the Iran/Iraq War, and the periodic battles between China and Vietnam were cited as examples. While in some respects this type of war should be most amenable to the remedies set out in the Charter, these conflicts have not been.

The Fairness Question

"The failure of global organizations," one participant said, "is a matter of degree. They do some good, but they're not hitting the big problems." The big problem which kept reemerging throughout all of these discussions was fairness. The gap between the world's rich and poor is increasing. The disparity between the powerful and the powerless is on the rise. Even some accomplishments such as limiting superpower confrontations in conflicts can be seen as having made the world safe for low-intensity conflict — wars that kill primarily poor people in underdeveloped countries. The participants' perception of an increasingly unfair world points to a fundamental breakdown of the United Nations as a global political organization. This is an organization which was created to make the world more fair, not less; more safe, not more dangerous.

It is in the economic sphere that the problems are most readily apparent. One participant noted that the world now has an annual economy of $13 trillion. By far the poorest continent is Africa which, it was said, needs $35 billion in investment per year over a twelve-year period to establish better prospects for economic growth. In a $13 trillion economy such a level of investment is small, but the prospects of that capital getting to Africa are poor. Africa is not seen as a good investment. The reasons for that are many, including bad policy decisions by African governments.

However, it is also true that the remedies for Africa's problems which are proposed by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank are seen as untenable by the Africans. Some participants noted that the African situation is so bad that widespread despair prevails. African leaders see little hope for sustained economic revival and, it was noted, polls taken in a number of African countries reveal ordinary citizens believe that they were better off under the colonial system. Ironically, dismantling the colonial system is regarded as one of the United Nations' principal accomplishments. The United Nations' most recent response to the African economic situation was a special session of the General

Assembly held in 1986 which resulted in an agreement to address the situation, but participants noted very little has been done to implement that agreement.

The world economy is both dynamic and polarized. Capital flows to investments where there is the greatest prospect for return. The world's wealthiest nations are entering a postindustrial era; they see lucrative opportunities are in services and information. Hence, those nations are concerned with negotiating international arrangements that create a favorable climate for doing business in those fields. Only after those concerns are addressed and only after newly industrialized countries have had their economies stabilized — another problem that has defied solution — is attention paid to the needs of those who in many instances are still living in below-subsistence economies.

It's an accepted fact that the economy is becoming more global in character and more interdependent. There is still, however, a dilemma stemming from the fact that there are nations and corporations which have great power and nations and people who have little power, yet they are affected by the actions of the powerful. Those with power need the stability and freedom to invest and invent. But there is also a need to, in the words of one participant, "temper that freedom with fairness." Promoting the latter objective has largely eluded the grasp of international organizations.

How can the twin issues of stability and fairness be addressed? How does one regulate a world economy that has become more global but that masks its most important problem? Where does one look to find the source of the problem?

Diagnosis and Prescriptions

Why is the United Nations unable to respond to the internationalist guiding principles or deal with the overriding global situations resulting from the realities of interdependence? The rapporteurs discerned three differing perspectives and responses to this question in the course of conference discussion — symptomatic, structural, and conceptual. Of course, there are many subtleties both among and within these various perspectives.

Perhaps a medical metaphor would be useful to illustrate the distinctions between the three approaches. Imagine a very ill patient arriving at a clinic badly in need of medical attention. The patient is diagnosed first by doctors who accurately identify the urgent symptoms and prescribe treatment for them. A second group of physicians examines the patient and diagnoses that he is

overweight, an alcoholic, and in need of corrective surgery — a structural diagnosis not only to treat the immediate symptoms but also to prescribe treatment that will assist in changing the makeup of the body to better enhance the prospects for long-term good health. The last group of medical experts to examine the patient may well conclude that the patient's immediate symptoms need treatment as the first group of doctors recommend and that the patient's continued good health also depends in large part on restructuring the patient's diet and exercise program and, perhaps, performing corrective surgery. However, this group is most interested in why the patient came to be in the state he is in — what led to the alcoholism and the general body abuse? They would focus on the intangible elements of this person's being — the patient's psyche for some and perhaps the soul for others — because they believe that all of the efforts of the other doctors may be for naught if the basic, conceptual conflict disturbing the patient is not resolved.

Symptomatic Approach

Applying the medical metaphor, one group of participants, while acknowledging the crisis status of the United Nations, saw most of the problems facing the organization as requiring a response on a symptomatic level. Perspectives in this group ranged from those who felt that the current crisis is not unique — although perhaps more severe than past problems — to those who felt that the symptoms of the current crisis are very serious and indeed threaten the viable existence of the United Nations. The similarity within this group is that they remain unconvinced that the United Nations is facing any real conceptual crisis or structural deficiencies. From their perspective the existing institutional mechanisms of the United Nations only need some fine-tuning and the willingness of the member states to live up to the Charter and to use the United Nations to address global problems.

Most who take this symptomatic approach feel that the framers of the UN Charter more than adequately laid out a set of guiding principles that serve as the conceptual basis for internationalism and the institutional embodiment of that concept, and that political will is what is needed to adhere to those principles. Thus, this group considers discussions that center on a fundamental rethinking of the United Nations on a conceptual level are unnecessary at best and potentially harmful. Such efforts could detract attention from the merits of the existing conceptualization and distract attention from the more immediate needs of the United Nations. Additionally, it was noted that because of the political state of the world a number of member states or other individuals or organizations would relish a chance to greatly weaken the moral

principles of the Charter if this matter were thrown open for debate and change.

This group was less opposed to considering structural change than reconceptualization. They would not support wholesale structural change but would be interested in "tinkering" with existing machinery to make it more efficient. By and large, this group still held that when members of the United Nations want to use the organization to achieve their ends the existing institutions and methods work well. It was pointed out that on some political issues such as terrorism and drugs the United Nations machinery works quite well to build member-nation consensus on devising approaches. They also noted the United Nations' impressive record in disaster relief, refugee work, and some development programs.

There was a corresponding range of opinion regarding what actions should be taken to "cure" the United Nations. Some felt that implementing recent recommendations by the Secretary-General and the Group of 18 concerning budgetary, financial, and personnel matters would relieve the pressure from the existing crisis and, perhaps, restore some faith in the ability of the United Nations to get its own house in order. This could potentially lead to greater willingness on the part of the member states to use the United Nations.

Sir John Thomson spoke for the participants in expressing appreciation for a productive conference.

A few who focused on the symptomatic approach did so not because they failed to see structural and conceptual problems but rather because they thought overriding political realities made the discussion of internationalism and structural change idealistic and only marginally useful. They believed such discussions lacked the necessary pragmatism to deal effectively with the crisis facing the United Nations. While this approach does not accomplish all one might wish, it may well be the best that can be achieved in the world that now exists. It should not be implied that these individuals saw no value in guiding principles and better structure to achieve real ends but rather that they thought that as positive as those ideas are they stand little chance of implementation at this time. Consequently, the United Nations must do the best it can under these constraints. If that means to respond in a way that satisfies some members' short-term concerns regarding efficiency, then these things must be given attention so that other good works may continue.

Structural Approach

Those who saw a need for fundamental structural, or as some termed it architectural, change agreed with their colleagues who took the symptomatic approach in rejecting an internationalist-oriented conceptual explanation for the current malaise. What they did see was a profound structural/functional crisis in multilateralism in need of somewhat more radical approaches than those recommended by the symptomatic group.

This analysis flows from a focus on the gap between the realities of today's global situation and the UN structure which was set up to deal with the post-World War II environment of 1945. For example, in the peace and security area, this group was most likely to point to the changed state of warfare from major land and naval wars fought between the great powers to multiple low-intensity conflicts. Another developement requiring structural attention is the advent of terrorism which is often disassociated from the nations-state system and, as such, has proven most difficult to deal with in the UN context. In fact, a few in this group went as far as to suggest that in the peace and security area the problems are so deep that they are not prone to remedy even through restructuring especially since restructuring is politically impossible anyway.

In the economic area, the structuralists agreed that the United Nations is largely irrelevant in global policymaking. They noted several examples of the gap between the realities of the global economy and the economic agenda of the United Nations. They add that the Bretton Woods institutions are also faltering in their

domains because they, too, operate from post-World War II assumptions. To bolster this point one participant noted that in the area of trade the structure was built on the assumption that states were capable of performing regulatory functions at the entry level. Now, however, the world has witnessed the globalization of production and finance which add further to the growing disjuncture between the world today and post-World War II institutions.

As with the group that chose the symptomatic approach, these participants held a range of views on the best approach to deal with the structural deficiencies of the United Nations. Some thought the United Nations is in need of total rethinking to make it better reflect the realities of the world, including nation-state power. Others felt that the emergence of regimes — the formal and informal relationships among concerned nations and international organizations that surround certain issue areas — will be productive since there is consensus that multilateral approaches do not necessarily mean total global approaches. But some countered that while there may be merit in the regime approach, there will always be essential global problems that have to be dealt with through globally inclusive organizations like the United Nations. Most agreed that these two ideas were not by definition antithetical and could be easily reconciled.

In any event, this group wanted to see structural reform of the United Nations to better position it to deal with the realities of today's world. That, they postulated, would make the institution a considerably more attractive alternative for nations to use in addressing world problems. In this sense, some participants theorized that negotiations could be undertaken to establish and clarify the relationship between a structure which more accurately reflects world political and economic power distribution, member-state willingness to use that revamped institution, and the ability of the institution to set a pragmatic agenda.

To support that view, one participant advanced his concept of an economic security council to replace the economic functions of the current Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This council would be small, representative of the economic power of various groups of nations, and supported by a commission of experts. He argued that such a restructured body should be able to command high-level attention from governments because of its improved capacity to identify and analyze global problems and to propose an agenda for addressing them.

By way of illustrating the diverse views within the conference,

some participants (mostly from the symptomatic group) saw such restructuring as too radical. Others (mostly from the conceptual group) saw it as inadequate to effect real change.

Conceptual Approach

The third perspective expressed at the conference focused on the conceptual state of internationalism and its embodiment in the United Nations. The participants in this group took the position that there is indeed an overriding conceptual crisis. Treating the symptoms, while necessary and worthwhile, is not a solution to the crisis but merely delays the inevitable deterioration of the institution. The conceptual group also saw merit in reconsidering the structure of the organization to better meet the realities of world problems, but did not think that restructuring would be likely to move the world community toward solving a conceptual crisis characterized by intellectual bankruptcy. Simply making the United Nations and the practice of multilateralism more efficient is not the same as making it more fair or more moral and, in fact, may allow the powerful to merely become more efficient at taking advantage of the weak. They agreed that there is a growing gap between global problems and increasingly irrelevant international institutions. However, from this perspective, what is needed is the courage of a Copernicus to reconceptualize the world in a way that is consistent with both reality and the common good.

Those participants who supported the view that the current crisis has its roots in conceptual problems noted that at present there seems to be an intellectual and conceptual vacuum: no one really knows how to approach global problems within the existing context and institutions, even if those institutions were radically altered structurally. They pointed out that there is no real concept of international cooperation and that the fairness issue must be addressed. Additionally, there is a need to rethink basic assumptions about how the world functions. While they admitted that others might see this as an abstract and futile effort, they countered by noting that for any policy to be successful it must have both vision and the sense that it is the right thing to do in order to sustain the public support that any effective policy requires. As one participant noted, "any reform is allowable in the context of a flat earth but to challenge the validity of the flat earth paradigm is viewed as unrealistic." They recommended an effort to establish norms in the world such as lawfulness; the mutually beneficial aspects of working for a common good on global issues; and other norms that would counter the cynicism of power, privilege, and the inability to reconceptualize a global community that reflects the realities of the world. In short, the present way of

Participants advanced ideas for evaluation by colleagues.

doing things simply is not working, the gap between problems and solutions is growing, and the general situation is likely to continue to deteriorate unless the wisdom and the strength to question the most basic beliefs about the world is mustered.

Conclusion

There are some dangers involved in establishing categories of thought. The device is useful to present an orderly report of the discussions, but ideas are not very tidy and do not fit into categories easily; neither do individuals and so assigning them a category is risky also. The other danger in creating groupings of thought is that it is too easy to see only the differences between them and not the similarities and points of intersection. Therefore, while it still makes sense to describe the discussions at this conference in terms of the three perspectives brought to the table, it is important to note that there was really a wide range of thought.

Despite the obvious and often sharp differences of perspective regarding the diagnosis of the crisis and the required prescriptive approach, there were a number of similarities that deserve mention. First, there was consensus among all three groups that leadership is a key element in achieving results or in implementing prescriptive measures. While the role of leadership and the

depth of its force would be radically different depending on the perspective one took, it is nonetheless evident that most participants see the need for this element in any approach. Second, all agreed that the rising tide of interdependence is a major global reality and must be dealt with effectively. Third, there seemed to be an acceptance of differentiating between internationalism as a concept and multilateralism as an organizational state. Fourth, there was consensus that there is a need for some form of guiding principles. Still, there remains the overriding question which constantly resurfaced and was aptly put by one participant: "How do you design an institution that considers the realities of the world combined with some notion of fairness?"

It is important to note that in spite of their different perspectives the individuals in all three groups are all interested in addressing that question. That is a commonality among them of no small significance because it may suggest a way to work on the answer. Some of the participants said that it is vital to labor on all three levels and to understand that they are inextricably linked in the pursuit of success — that is, to deal with urgent symptoms, to contemplate structural adjustments as necessary, and to focus on a new vision which contemplates a long-term definition of self-interest and which strives for fairness. What such an approach requires is mutual appreciation and respect for the varying perspectives and the efforts toward a better world which they inspire.

Time for reflection and individual conversation

Chairman's Observations

This conference topic, "The United Nations and the Future of Internationalism" pressed participants to examine the performance of the institution relative to the goals and ideals which it was intended to promote. I expected that this would be hard work and it was.

In recent years there has been much discussion among those who value the United Nations about the need to reform the organization. The rising tide of global interdependence threatens to submerge the United Nations unless reform makes it a more relevant and effective vessel for concepts of internationalism. The Stanley Foundation has regularly been a part of these discussions, convening conferences aimed at facilitating reform. But such discussions have usually been somewhat limited in scope. It is easier to address what this rapporteurs' report describes as "symptoms" than to develop a vision of the United Nations of the future and its role in dealing with the needs of our increasingly interdependent world.

Reform discussions have strayed from the more fundamental review for a variety of reasons. As participants at this conference found, it is difficult to think boldly about significant change. There are those who believe that dealing with symptoms is sufficient and that only minor steps are needed to correct any institutional difficulties in the United Nations. Some believe that the real difficulty is in national intent and that lack of sufficient political will is the primary limitation on UN effectiveness. Others believe it is useless to consider fundamental reform, either because it will be impossible to achieve or because the institution is so badly flawed that no correction is possible. Still others fear that the outcome of efforts at fundamental reform will more likely damage than strengthen the United Nations.

But the results of this conference strengthen my conviction that, in spite of resistance and difficulty, serious discussion of fundamental UN reform must continue. We will have failed future generations if we permit the United Nations and the concepts of internationalism which it embodies to continue to drift toward ineffectiveness and irrelevancy.

The aspirations of the UN Charter are sound. The Charter Preamble holds high the concepts of internationalism which must continue to be our goal. It talks of peace, human rights, justice, freedom, security, and equity. Certainly these are concepts

which grow in importance as global interdependence becomes more pervasive. We must hold fast to these ideals, particularly in times when progress toward them is elusive.

In continuing serious reform discussion, we must recognize that there are many international issues which are not being adequately handled today by the international system. This is apparent when one examines the relative lack of progress and, in some cases, retrogression from the ideals of the Charter.

Reform deliberation must recognize that the United Nations is a part of the international system, not the whole. Participants at this conference exhibited considerable commitment toward making the United Nations a more significant and more effective part of the international system. They were not willing to give up on it. But, nonetheless, I saw a great deal of willingness to look beyond and outside the United Nations for institutional solutions that would deal with international issues and foster the ideals of internationalism.

Continuing discussions will be helped if they begin with problems, functions, and needs rather than with institutions. Classic problem solving first analyzes circumstances, needs, and problems, and then proceeds toward solutions. Yet, discussions of UN reform tend to start with the institution. It will be more productive to define and analyze international problems and needs and then find, develop, or modify optimal international institutions.

Finally, I left this conference with even stronger conviction that the work must continue. It is constructive to work at all levels to strengthen internationalism as a concept and the United Nations as an organization. Those who perceive the problems on the symptomatic level make a real contribution by seeking ways to improve performance within current structure and arrangements. Those who see the need for structural change foster development of better institutional arrangements. At the same time, those who focus on ways to improve commitment to the ideals of internationalism can create a political climate in which progress is possible and institutions can function more effectively. These approaches are not mutually exclusive and each merits support.

These are times for renewed effort, not despair. The ideals of internationalism as set forth in the Preamble to the UN Charter should be a guiding beacon. Serious and continuing fundamental examination of the United Nations and other international institutions is essential. Only with the best possible institutional

tools and the most wise and dedicated use of them can humanity move toward realization of the goals of internationalism, a world that is more peaceful, free, fair, just, and secure.

The Stanley Foundation

Activities

The Stanley Foundation works toward the goal of a secure peace with freedom and justice by encouraging study, research, and discussion of international issues. Programs strive to enhance individual awareness and commitment and to affect public policy.

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UN-Related Publications

Administrative and Budgetary Reform of the United Nations, Report of the Eighteenth United Nations Issues Conference. February 1987, 28 pp.

The United Nations: Mission and Management, Report of the Twenty-first United Nations of the Next Decade Conference. June 1986, 32 pp.

The United States, the United Nations, and the Future, Twenty-sixth Strategy for Peace Conference Report. October 1985, 16 pp.

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